

Why English Is So Hard

**We'll begin with box, the plural is boxes.
But the plural of ox should be oxen, not oxes.
One foul is a goose, but two are called geese,
yet the plural of mouse is never meese.
You may find a lone mouse, or a whole nest of mice,
But the plural of house is houses, not hice.
If the plural of man is always men,
Why shouldn't the plural of pan be called pen?
The cow in the plural may be called cows or kine,
But a bow, if repeated, is never called bine;
And the plural of vow is vows, not vine.**

**If I speak of a foot and you show me two feet,
And I give you a boot, would a pair be called beet?
If one is a tooth and a whole set are teeth,
Why shouldn't the plural of booth be called beeth?
If the singular's this, and the plural these,
Should the plural of kiss ever be written kese?
We speak of a brother, and also of brethren,
But though we say mother, we never say mothren.
Then the masculine pronouns are he, his, and him,
But imagine the feminine, she, shis, and shim!
So English, I think you all will agree,
Is the funniest language you ever did see.**

Anonymous

Writing Mechanics and Grammar Continuum

Fourth Grade		Fifth Grade	Fourth Grade	Fifth Grade
Punctuating Dialogue *Identifies speaker at the beginning of a sentence (e.g., Stacey's mother shouted, "You need to finish your homework!") *Consistently uses quotation marks around spoken words in their writing *Consistently capitalizes first letter inside quotation marks *Consistently places punctuation before the end quotation mark: "I think we'd better finish this right away!" *Begins to understand the comma replaces a period when the tag is at the end (e.g., "I had a great time at our meeting," Katie said.)		Punctuating Dialogue *Has mastered and consistently uses appropriate ending punctuation inside quotation marks *Introduces quotation marks when speaker is identified mid-quote (e.g., "Hello," Tim said, "how are you?") *Consistently uses a comma to replace a period when the tag is at the end (e.g., "I had a great time at our meeting," Katie said.)	Capitalization *Has mastered and consistently uses capitals for all proper nouns *Uses proper capitalization for titles of books and movies	Capitalization *Uses proper capitalization for events (e.g., Family Fun Friday)

Fourth Grade	Fifth Grade
Paragraphing *Consistently indents at the beginning of a paragraph *In expository writing, consistently changes paragraph to show a change in idea *In narrative writing, begins to change paragraph to demonstrate: -A new person talking -A change in scene -Time passing Use of Tense *Consistently uses correct tense within a text	Paragraphing *In expository writing, has mastered and consistently changes paragraph to show a change in idea (e.g., in the introduction, body, and conclusion) *In narrative writing, consistently changes paragraph to demonstrate: -A new person talking -A change in scene -Time passing Use of Tense *Has mastered the correct use of tense within a text

*Adapted from *Practical Punctuation* by Dan Feigelson by Sarah Levine, Anne King, Jennifer Leventhal, Jessica Hennigan, Alison Alevy, and Annetie Burton

Fourth Grade	Fifth Grade
Apostrophes *Uses the singular possessive apostrophe *Begins to use the plural possessive apostrophe (e.g., The boys' toy.)	Apostrophes *Has mastered and consistently uses possessive apostrophes correctly, both singular and plural
Sentence Structure *Uses a variety of sentence structures in their independent writing *Continues to develop their use of compound sentences *Uses commas to punctuate compound sentences *Begins to use more complex transitional language (e.g., therefore, however, in fact)	Sentence Structure *Has mastered the use of conjunctions *Incorporates quotes and citations *Experiments with placement of conjunctions in sentences *Consistently uses more complex sentences (e.g., sentences containing appositives and clauses to tuck in information) *Consistently uses more complex transitional language

Fourth Grade	Fifth Grade
Ending Punctuation *Begins to vary ending punctuation to improve writing	Ending Punctuation *Varies ending punctuation to improve writing
Punctuation Within a Sentence *Uses commas before a conjunction (e.g., I went to the store, but I forgot my money.) *Begins to use commas between city and state and state and country *Uses commas after introductory words or phrases consistently *Begins to tuck in information with appositives (e.g., Barbara, a third grade teacher, loved teaching punctuation.) *Uses parentheses, ellipses, and dashes correctly *Begins to use colons and semi-colons correctly	Punctuation Within a Sentence *Consistently uses commas between city and state and state and country *Consistently uses commas with appositives *Has mastered the use of parentheses, ellipses, and dashes *Uses colons and semi-colons correctly

Fourth Grade	Fifth Grade
Parts of Speech *Balances the use of proper nouns and pronouns *Knows what adverbs are and uses them in their writing	Parts of Speech *Uses adverbs properly *Knows what a preposition is *Avoids ending sentences with a preposition

A Curriculum Calendar of Direct Instruction Across the Writing Process

	UNIT 1	UNIT 2	UNIT 3
DRAFTING			<p>Lesson 1 (Ending Punctuation): Writers make choices about ending punctuation while writing.</p> <p>Lesson 2 (Paragraphing): Fluent writers break their writing into chunks as they write.</p>
REVISION	<p>Lesson 1 (Ending Punctuation): Writers make choices about ending punctuation as a revision strategy.</p> <p>Lesson 2 (Paragraphing): Writers break their writing into smaller chunks during revision.</p>	<p>Lesson 1 (Ending Punctuation): Writers make choices about ending punctuation as they draft.</p> <p>Lesson 2 (Paragraphing): Writers make choices about inserting paragraphs while drafting.</p>	<p>Lesson 3 (Subject and Predicate): Writers write complete sentences as they draft.</p> <p>Lesson 4 (Fragments): Writers consider their genre and audience and make decisions about fragments as they draft.</p>
FINAL WRITING			<p>Lesson 5 (Subject-Verb Agreement): Writers revise their writing so that subject and verb agree, and we learn singular and plural forms of nouns, pronouns, and verbs to do this.</p> <p>Lesson 6 (Subject and Object): Writers understand subject and object in order to use the proper form of pronouns and <i>who/whom</i>. We revise our writing to use proper forms of pronouns and <i>who/whom</i>. We revise our writing to use proper forms.</p>

A Curriculum Calendar of Direct Instruction Across the Writing Process, cont'd.

UNIT 4	UNIT 5	UNIT 6	UNIT 7
<p>Lesson 3 (Subject and Predicate): Fluent writers mostly compose in complete sentences when writing prose.</p> <p>Lesson 4 (Fragments): Writers, if they use fragments, do so knowingly, purposefully, and sparingly.</p>	<p>Lesson 5 (Subject-Verb Agreement): Writers practice subject-verb agreement as they write.</p> <p>Lesson 6 (Subject and Object): Writers try to use the proper forms of pronouns and <i>who/whom</i> as they write.</p>	<p>Lesson 7 (Verb Tense): Writers make choices about verb tense as they write, and they strive to use verb endings and forms consistent with their choice.</p> <p>Lesson 8 (Punctuating Dialogue): Writers learn to punctuate dialogue properly, and we punctuate as needed while writing.</p>	<p>Lesson 9 (Commas in Lists): Writers know how commas separate items in a list and use commas this way as we write.</p> <p>Lesson 10 (Using Commas and Conjunctions): Writers know how to write longer sentences by joining complete sentences with a comma and a conjunction. We strive to vary our sentences this way when writing.</p>
<p>Lesson 5 (Subject-Verb Agreement): Writers practice subject-verb agreement as they draft.</p> <p>Lesson 6 (Subject and Object): Writers try to use the proper forms of pronouns, and <i>who/whom</i> as they draft.</p>	<p>Lesson 7 (Verb Tense): Writers make choices about verb tense as they draft and they try to maintain verb endings consistent with their tense choice.</p> <p>Lesson 8 (Punctuating Dialogue): Writers learn to punctuate dialogue properly, and we punctuate as needed while drafting.</p>	<p>Lesson 9 (Commas in Lists): Writers learn how commas separate items in a list and use commas this way as we draft.</p> <p>Lesson 10 (Using Commas and Conjunctions): Writers learn to write longer sentences by joining complete sentences with a comma and a conjunction. We can vary our sentences this way while drafting.</p>	<p>Lesson 11 (Apostrophes): Writers understand how apostrophes signify possessive forms and contractions, and we strive to use these forms to convey meaning as we draft.</p> <p>Lesson 12 (Semicolons and Colons): Writers understand that the semicolon and colon can be interesting ways to join sentences. We use them these ways as we draft.</p>
<p>Lesson 7 (Verb Tense): Writers make choices about verb tense as a revision strategy and they maintain the tense of their choice by learning and checking their verb endings.</p> <p>Lesson 8 (Punctuating Dialogue): Writers learn to punctuate dialogue properly, and we punctuate as needed in revision.</p>	<p>Lesson 9 (Commas in Lists): Writers learn how commas separate items in a list, and we revise our writing to include them.</p> <p>Lesson 10 (Using Commas and Conjunctions): Writers learn to write longer sentences by joining complete sentences with a comma and a conjunction. We can revise our writing for greater sentence variety.</p>	<p>Lesson 11 (Apostrophes): Writers study how apostrophes signify possessive forms and contractions, and we revise our writing to use these forms to convey meaning.</p> <p>Lesson 12 (Semicolons and Colons): Writers learn that the semicolon and colon can be interesting ways to join sentences. We study their usage and try them in revision.</p>	

Punctuation/Grammar Study- Possible Sequence of Mini-Lessons
(Two week study)

<i>Day</i>	<i>Stage in Writing Process</i>	<i>Focus of Mini-lesson (Strategy)</i>
1	Immersion	Read picture books with a partner to look for interesting punctuation and what it tells the reader to do. Students can create a chart in their Writer's Notebook to keep track of 1) the book and author 2) punctuation 3) what it tells the reader to do and 4) list the specific example.
2	Immersion	Students share what they recorded on their chart with the class. Create an ongoing class chart of this information for students to refer to.
3	Collecting	Teach students about subjects and predicates (focusing on nouns/pronouns, verbs and adjectives). Students free write in their Writer's Notebooks focusing on creating complete sentences.
4	Collecting	Teach students about punctuating conjunctions and using conjunctions to vary sentence length. (focus on and, but, because). Students free write in their Writer's Notebooks focusing on varying sentence length and punctuation conjunctions properly.
5	Collecting	Teach students how to punctuate more complicated forms of dialogue (such as when the character speaking is indicated in the middle of a sentence). Students free write in their Writer's Notebooks focusing on using dialogue in their entry and punctuating it correctly.
6	Selecting/Drafting	Select an entry from their free writing to publish. Teach students about writing in present vs. past tense. Students much select a tense for their story and draft it using a consistent tense.

7	Revision	Teach students about the different uses of apostrophes. Students focus on revising their drafts for possessives and contractions.
8	Revision	Teach students about the uses of more complex punctuation (colons and semi-colons, parentheses and ellipses). Students continue to revise their drafts trying out these more complex forms of punctuation.
9	Editing	Students use an editing checklist to check their writing for correct capitalization and spelling.
10	Publish	

Book/Author	Punctuation Mark	What it Tells the Reader to do...	Example from Text

Past and Present Tense

Strategy: Writers make choices about the tense (past or present) in which they write.

Present Tense- The story is happening now, or in the present.

Writers use the present tense if they want to create a sense of immediacy or tension in their story. The present tense hooks the reader right away. Present tense writing can be very snappy and lively.

Example of Present Tense Narrative:

We play every night from right after dinner until its dark and we hear our mothers calling, whistling, or yelling. Sometimes we play in our backyard, where there is a treehouse to hide in and a garage to run around. We play hide and seek. My brother jumps out and scares me!

Past Tense- The story happened before, or in the past.

Writers use the past tense if they want to give the reader a sense of looking back at an event. The past tense tells the reader that the writer lived this event and has a certain perspective on it, or has learned something from the event. Past tense sometimes lets the reader know something before the characters in the story find out.

Example of Past Tense Narrative:

We played every night from right after dinner until dark, when our mothers called, whistled, or yelled for us. Sometimes we played in the backyard, where there was a treehouse to hide in and a garage to run around. Those nights were so fun and filled with so many great memories.